

SUMMARY OF BOARD ITEM

ITEM NO. 01-5-5: PUBLIC MEETING TO CONSIDER THE 2001 BIENNIAL REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE ON THE PHASE-DOWN AND THE 1998-2000 PAUSE IN THE PHASE DOWN OF RICE STRAW BURNING IN THE SACRAMENTO VALLEY AIR BASIN

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the Board approve the 2001 Biennial Report on the Phase-Down and 1998 to 2000 Pause in the Phase Down of Rice Straw Burning and forward the report to the Legislature

DISCUSSION: The Connelly-Arias-Chandler Rice Straw Burning Reduction Act of 1991 requires the Air Resources Board (ARB) and the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) to prepare and submit a report to the Legislature every two years on progress in reducing the amount of rice straw burned in the Sacramento Valley. This report focuses on activities occurring since the 1999 report.

The ARB is also required to submit a report presenting findings regarding the air quality, public health, and economic impacts associated with the burning of rice straw during the years 1998 to 2000, when the phase-down schedule was paused at 200,000 acres. The "pause" report is incorporated in the 2001 biennial report.

The Act requires that the following topics be covered in the biennial reports:

- Alternatives to rice straw burning and recommendations from the Alternatives Advisory Committee;
- Progress toward achieving the 50 percent diversion goal for off-field uses of rice straw;
- Progress of the burning phase-down;
- Environmental and economic assessments; and
- Any related issues, including any recommendations.

SUMMARY AND IMPACTS: This is the fourth in a series of reports to the Legislature. The report focuses on the status of alternative off-field uses for rice straw, air quality and economic impacts of the phase-down, and an assessment of other ecological effects due to reductions in burning, including impacts on soil and water quality, and wildlife.

In preparing this report, the staff of ARB and CDFA reviewed current information on each of these topics. The phase-down requirements are being met. The key issue continues to be the status of alternatives to rice straw burning. This report provides an update on the existing and promising new projects for use of rice straw.

CALIFORNIA AIR RESOURCES BOARD**NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING TO CONSIDER THE 2001 REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE - PROGRESS REPORT ON THE PHASE DOWN AND THE 1998-2000 PAUSE IN THE PHASE DOWN OF RICE STRAW BURNING IN THE SACRAMENTO VALLEY AIR BASIN**

The Air Resources Board (Board or ARB) will conduct a public meeting at the time and place noted below to consider the 2001 Report to the Legislature - Progress Report on the Phase Down and the 1998-2000 Pause in the Phase Down of Rice Straw Burning in the Sacramento Valley Air Basin.

DATE: June 28, 2001

TIME: 9:00 a.m.

PLACE: California EPA Headquarters Building
Coastal Hearing Room, Second Floor
1001 "I" Street
Sacramento, California 95814

This item will be considered at a two-day meeting of the Board, which will commence at 9:00 a.m., June 28, 2001, and may continue at 8:30 a.m., June 29, 2001. This item may not be considered until June 29, 2001. Please consult the agenda for the meeting, which will be available at least 10 days before June 28, 2001, to determine the day on which this item will be considered.

The facility is accessible to persons with disabilities. If accommodation is needed, please contact the Clerk of the Board at (916) 322-5594, or TDD (916) 324-9531 or (800) 700-8326 for TDD calls from outside the Sacramento area by June 13, 2001, to ensure accommodation.

The Connelly-Arias-Chandler Rice Straw Burning Reduction Act of 1991 requires the ARB and the California Department of Food and Agriculture to prepare and submit a report to the Legislature every two years on progress in reducing the amount of rice straw burned in the Sacramento Valley. This report focuses on activities occurring since the 1999 report. The ARB is also required to submit a report presenting findings regarding the air quality, public health, and economic impacts associated with the burning of rice straw during the years 1998 to 2000, when the phase-down schedule was paused at 200,000 acres. The "pause" report is incorporated in the 2001 biennial report.

The ARB staff have prepared a draft report entitled "2001 Report to the Legislature - Progress Report on the Phase Down and the 1998-2000 Pause in the Phase Down of Rice Straw Burning in the Sacramento Valley Air Basin."

Copies of the draft report and this notice may be obtained from the ARB Public Information Office, 1001 "I" Street, 1st Floor, Environmental Services Center, Sacramento, CA 95814, (916) 322-2990, or on the ARB internet site at <http://www.arb.ca.gov/smp/phsdown/rice01.htm> at least 15 days prior to the scheduled meeting (June 28, 2001).

Interested members of the public may present comments orally or in writing at the meeting, and in writing or by e-mail before the meeting. To be considered by the Board, written submissions not physically submitted at the meeting must be received no later than 12:00 noon, June 27, 2001, and addressed to the following:

Postal mail is to be sent to:

Clerk of the Board
Air Resources Board
1001 "I" Street, 23rd Floor
Sacramento, California 95814

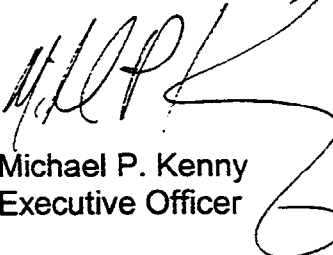
Electronic mail is to be sent to rice01@listserv.arb.ca.gov and received at the ARB no later than 12:00 noon, June 27, 2001.

Facsimile submissions are to be transmitted to the Clerk of the Board at (916) 322-3928 and received at the ARB no later than 12:00 noon June 27, 2001.

The Board requests but does not require 30 copies of any written submission. Also, the ARB requests that written and e-mail statements be filed at least 10 days prior to the meeting so that ARB staff and Board members have time to fully consider each comment.

Further inquiries regarding this matter should be directed to Ms. Theresa Najita, Air Pollution Specialist, (916) 322-7297, Air Resources Board, 1001 "I" Street, Sacramento, California 95814.

CALIFORNIA AIR RESOURCES BOARD



Michael P. Kenny
Executive Officer

Date: June 13, 2001

"The energy challenge facing California is real. Every Californian needs to take immediate action to reduce energy consumption. For a list of simple ways you can reduce demand and cut your energy costs, see our Web-site at www.arb.ca.gov."